

Writer Alert: Libros International

March 15, 2010

In 2008 a National Writers Union member signed a contract to have her novel published by Libros International, based in Spain and owned by two British citizens. In early December the member was informed that Libros's printer, Lightning Source, would not be able to supply books in time for holiday sales. Furious because she had hired a publicist to promote her work then, she asked the NWU Grievance and Contract Division to negotiate the end of her contract, which was accomplished in February 2009. (Note: The writer never received royalty statements, though she got two small checks.) The member has since published happily with another firm.

However, the author discovered her novel continued to be sold on Libros's website and on Amazon in both the U.S and the U.K. She was able to get it removed from the U.S. site but not the U.K. site. The grievance officer (GO) wrote Libros requesting a final royalty statement and check, and asked that the book be removed from the U.K. site. The publisher explained that Amazon U.K. had bought six copies of the novel, so he did not control those sales. Several months later the publisher offered 4+ pounds as final payment (about \$6). That accounted for the sale to Amazon U.K. but not Libros's online sales. (We cannot estimate those sales since the author never received a royalty statement.) The GO asked again for a complete accounting including Libros's online sales. The publisher did not respond until February 2010, when the GO again requested a final royalty statement and check, and warned that the NWU would be compelled to post a Writer Alert exposing the publisher's illegal and unethical conduct. The publisher claims to have sent the member a final royalty statement and payment, but the member received neither. When asked to resend those items, the publisher cut off communication and thus remains in violation of the contract.